

REPORT OF MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1915.

GODALMING,

January, 1916.

GENTLEMEN,

In compiling the Annual Report for 1915, one cannot but notice how nearly every item has been affected by the deplorable war.

The Domestic Life of the Nation has been upset; homes broken up; husbands and sons called away to fight for Home and Country in a manner quite foreign to peaceful England.

The Birth-rate has gone down, the Death-rate has gone up; while the anxieties of the Council for the welfare of the Town have been increased.

In spite of the additional dangers attending locomotion, owing to the stringent lighting regulations, combined with the destruction of our usually excellent roads by the heavy motor traffic, there has not been any marked increase in the number of accidents.

Godalming and District has shown up well in her offers of Recruits.

The rain-fall for the year has been very heavy, especially in the months of February and December. A wet summer, however, is a healthy one, and from a sanitary point of view is preferable to a prolonged drought.

Births and Deaths.—The number of Births for the year was 151. Of these 84 were boys and 67 girls.

The birth-rate for the year is a considerable drop from that of 1914.

The cause of this is no doubt the breaking up of homes incident to the War.

The number of illegitimate births for the year is 9, only two more than last year.

The scare about “war babies” prevalent at the beginning of the year has thus, as far as Godalming is concerned, proved to have been unnecessary.

The following table shows the distribution of deaths for Godalming residents, with the death-rate per 1,000 for same :—

Deaths within the Borough...	...	...	86	at a rate of 9·67 per 1,000 per annum.
Deaths in the Surrey County Hospital	...	...	4	
Deaths in the Guildford Union Infirmary	...	...	11	
Deaths in Joint Isolation Hospital	...	...	2	
Death in Brookwood Asylum	...	...	1	
Deaths elsewhere	...	...	7	

Total 111 at a rate of 12·49 per 1,000 per annum.

A comparison with the Births and Deaths of the last 5 years is here shown :—

			<i>Birth-rate.</i>			<i>Death-rate.</i>
1911	...	...	17·52	...	...	10·96
1912	...	...	18·29	...	...	10·61
1913	...	...	18·72	...	...	11·39
1914	...	...	19·70	...	...	11·37
1915	...	...	16·99	...	...	12·49

Infant Mortality.—There were 15 deaths of babies under one year of age, giving a death-rate per 1,000 births of 99·33.

Owing to the importance of saving every child brought into the world, considerable energy has been directed recently by the Local Government Board to this purpose. The Notification of Births (Extension) Act came into force on September 1st last, and this is to be followed up by a Maternity and Child Welfare Scheme, established either by the County Council or the Town Council, by which the mothers and infants of the poorer classes will be cared for, and the mothers will be instructed as to how to bring up their children in the best way.

Notifiable Diseases.—During the year the following Notifiable Diseases occurred :—

Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	133
Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	1
Phthisis	...	...	...	...	15
Erysipelas	...	...	...	...	3
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis	...	...	...	...	1

The Scarlet Fever has been of an extremely mild type. Some of the cases were not recognised as such until the patient began to peel, about the third week of the disease, consequently during this time infection was spreading to others. Although on the face of it this appears to denote carelessness on the part of those in authority it was really excusable. The patient may not have felt ill ; may not even have been feverish ; the rash often was trivial ; and the mildness of the complaint such as to entirely allay suspicion ; and yet the case proved to be true scarlet fever.

The monthly statistics of Scarlet Fever were as follows :

January	...	6	July	...	14
February	...	0	August	...	15
March	...	2	September	...	11
April	...	1	October	...	13
May	...	5	November	...	31
June	...	12	December	...	21

The epidemic was not confined to any particular part of the Town, and Charterhouse suffered in June and July and again in November and December.


Two of the cases from the Town unfortunately had a fatal ending, but otherwise, as previously stated, the epidemic was mild in character.

I am glad to say that although the end of the year showed many cases of Scarlet Fever, the epidemic now is abating.

Cerebro=spinal Meningitis.—The one case of Cerebro-spinal Meningitis died in Guildford Infirmary.

Every care is taken to guard against a spread of this serious disease, and when any doubtful case arises a thorough disinfection is carried out.

Small Pox.—There have been no cases of Small Pox notified during the year, and the Vaccination returns show a slight improvement. The statistics however are still deplorable and I would like to echo Dr. Bird's note of warning as to what may be expected in the event of small pox coming to the Town.



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	1911.	1912.	1913.	1914.	1915.
Births Registered	155	162	163	172	151
Successful Vaccinations	60	61	46	50	50
Insusceptible	0	0	0	1	0
Died Unvaccinated	9	2	9	8	8
Postponed	1	1	5	2	2
Removed out of the Borough ...	3	6	2	3	3
"Conscientious" Objections ...	58	70	75	83	69
Unaccounted for Dec. 31st ...	24	22	26	25	19

On the lesser Zymotic diseases, I might mention that German Measles and Measles were prevalent in June and July, necessitating closure of the Infants' Schools.

On January 1st, 1916, the notification of Measles and German Measles became compulsory.

The Mortality from Measles and its complications account for about 11,000 deaths per annum, in England and Wales.

Hitherto little care has been shown among the poorer classes when this illness has arisen. A Medical man is rarely called in to attend, and the patient is sent out into the streets to play when the skin is inflamed, and susceptible to chill. The result too often is Broncho-pneumonia and death. Stringent directions have been issued by the Local Government Board with a laudable effort to remedy this evil.

Water Supply.—Since the slight epidemic of the end of 1914, the condition of the water has much exercised the minds of the Godalming inhabitants.

It would be as well to point out that the great care and attention bestowed upon this matter has been successful in preventing any further illness.

In spite of the requirements of Witley Camp, which necessitate the use of over 200,000 gallons per diem, there has been enough water to meet the demands of everybody.

As a precaution, an additional supply of water for the Borough has been obtained from the Chiddingfold Water Company.

An additional deep boring will also shortly be added to the Water Supply, so the inhabitants need not fear a shortage in the future.

As regards the quality of the Water frequent Analyses are made by experts and I append the last Report of the year given by Drs. Thresh and Beale.

Of course these samples are taken before any treatment by Sodium Hypochlorite.

THE COUNTIES' PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORIES.

December 28th, 1915.

Report on two Samples of Water submitted by the Borough of Godalming, Dec. 28th, 1915—

No. 1—"Borough Road Supply."

No. 2—"Mixed Supply Ockford Works."

Bacteriologically both these Samples of Water are of excellent quality. They contain very few Bacteria, and none of an objectionable character.

THRESH & BEALE.

In view of the proximity of Witley Camp, with its 30,000 soldiers and 6,000 horses, especial care and attention is being directed to avoid any contamination of our Water Supply.

One cannot but feel that there is some anxiety on this score.

Although no doubt the Camp Authorities are doing everything they can for the best, if an extension of the Godalming drainage system to embrace Milford and Witley Camp could be entertained, one feels that this anxiety would be overcome.

Milk Supply.—Periodical inspections of the premises and utensils of Purveyors of Milk, have been made by the Sanitary Inspector.

The number of registered Milk Shops within the Borough are 7, while 8 Purveyors of Milk are registered.

Food Supply.—Twelve Slaughter Houses, seven for Cattle and five for Pigs, are within the Borough.

The Sanitary Inspector reports that the owners have complied with the Bye-laws which are in force in the Borough for keeping these places in a satisfactory condition.

Bakehouses.—The 14 Bakehouses, although mostly of an old type, are also kept in a proper state of repair and cleanliness.

Common Lodging Houses.—There are two Registered Common Lodging Houses. Periodical inspection by the Sanitary Officer has proved that these premises are conducted in a satisfactory manner.

Factories and Workshops.—Seventy-two Workshops and 18 Factories are registered.

Housing, Nuisances, &c.—The Sanitary Inspector has inspected 125 Houses in accordance with the Housing Inspection of District Regulations, 1910.

A table here shows the results found :

£30 AND UNDER—89 INSPECTED :—

41 found satisfactory.

48 required general repairs and lime-washing.

£16 AND UNDER—36 INSPECTED :—

21 found satisfactory.

15 required general repairs and lime-washing.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

BERTRAM W. BOND,

M.B., B.S. DURHAM.,

M.R.C.S. ENG., L.R.C.P. LOND.,

L.S.A.

